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SUBJECT: CHINA'S MFA, CAEA PRESS FOR GREATER NUCLEAR SECURITY
COOPERATION WITH DOE/NNSA

Sensitive but unclassified - please protect accordingly.

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Admiral Joseph J. Krol, Associate Administrator for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Office of Emergency Operations, met with officials from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA) on January 6-8 to discuss nuclear/radiological emergency response and continuing collaboration under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Admiral Krol also pressed for resuming collaboration on the long range tracer experiment (LRTE), an exercise designed to monitor and track a simulated radioactive plume across China. The MFA and CAEA acknowledged that a bureaucratic reorganization of the Chinese government in 2008 had slowed some emergency response-related collaboration with the United States, but both Chinese organizations expressed a strong desire to reinvigorate cooperation. Bolstering these statements, CAEA proposed detailed discussions between U.S. and Chinese medical teams that would be responsible for responding to a nuclear-related mass casualty event, while the MFA said it agreed in principal to the U.S. proposal to establish a center of excellence on nuclear security in China. END SUMMARY.

MFA LOOKING TO UP NONPROLIFERATION COOPERATION

¶12. (SBU) Deputy Director General (DDG) WU Haitao of the MFA's Arms Control Department thanked Admiral Krol and noted China's appreciation for USG assistance in the area of nuclear security. Wu said that U.S. DOE and IAEA-sponsored training, particularly in the run-up to the Olympics, had been very helpful in building China's capacity to prevent nuclear terrorism and to ensure nuclear security; however, Wu acknowledged that some of this cooperation had stalled due to the 2008 government reorganization, which left key Chinese agencies short-handed. Noting that nuclear safety and security is China's top priority as the government presses forward with the rapid expansion of nuclear power, Wu said China is ready and anxious to reengage with the United States in the area of nuclear security.

¶13. (SBU) According to DDG Wu, Chinese government interagency discussions on the U.S.-China Nuclear Security Cooperation non-paper, which was passed to MFA during DOE Under Secretary Daniel Poneman's visit to China in October 2009, have concluded and the GoC is in agreement with the paper's substance. Moreover, Wu said the MFA wants to move forward on the non-paper's proposal to establish a center of excellence in China. [NOTE: The U.S. non-paper calls for the establishment of a joint center in China which will promote the adoption of modern security practices and anti-theft/anti-diversion technologies at Chinese nuclear facilities. END NOTE.]

¶14. (SBU) China remains committed to joint efforts related to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), said DDG Wu, who also noted that the Chinese government is moving to establish law enforcement regimes for nuclear security. In response to Admiral Krol's suggestion that more Asian countries, including

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Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia, become involved in the GICNT, DDG Wu said these countries may be hesitant initially because they do not know how participation in GICNT will impact their sovereignty. Wu also said that the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is still controversial and that the relationship between PSI and GI is unclear to many. Wu suggested more "awareness raising" of GICNT and an increased management focus on current challenges, noting that the MFA feels burdened by the large number of GICNT events because they require a significant amount of interagency coordination when deciding whether China will participate.

CAEA REMAINS KEY PARTNER IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE COOPERATION

¶15. (SBU) In a separate meeting with the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA), Systems Engineering Director General (DG), TONG Baotong and YU Ping, the Deputy Director of CAEA's National Nuclear Emergency Response Office, briefed Admiral Krol on roles and responsibilities within the Chinese government in the event of a nuclear emergency. DG Tong said that the National Nuclear Emergency Coordination Committee was the primary mechanism for coordinating China's response to a large-scale nuclear incident. The Committee is made of twenty different departments from various ministries and organizations throughout the Chinese government. The Minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) serves as the Committee Chairman while the CAEA Chairman acts as the Committee's Executive Secretary and Vice Chairman. The Committee is responsible for responding to emergencies at both civilian and military nuclear facilities, according to Tong.

¶16. (SBU) CAEA -- highly impressed with DOE/NNSA's medical capability to rapidly identify the specific isotope in a nuclear emergency (radiological triage) and respond to radiological injuries -- proposed detailed discussions between U.S. and Chinese medical teams tasked with responding to a nuclear emergency. DG Tong suggested holding a seminar to explain respective medical operations and capabilities.

¶17. (SBU) However, efforts to convince CAEA to restart the Long Range Tracer Experiment (LRTE) were met more cautiously. Admiral Krol noted that the U.S. and China were nearly ready to conduct the LRTE in 2007, but that Olympic-related nuclear security cooperation had resulted in the experiment being put on hold. CAEA's Yu Ping said that the LRTE is a significant program and will provide important new tools for monitoring a radiological plume in the event

of an accidental release from a nuclear power plant or other nuclear accident. Nevertheless, CAEA is concerned over public perception of the experiment, particularly in light of all the new nuclear power plant construction occurring in China. Despite having completed site selection and much of the scientific work for the LRTE, Yu said that a central government reorganization in 2008 and a provincial government reorganization in 2009 had resulted in many new faces within the bureaucracy and CAEA needed more time to educate the public and to coordinate with provincial governments. At DG Tong's suggestion, DOE/NNSA agreed to work with CAEA to develop a timeline for restarting the tracer experiment. [COMMENT: CAEA's cautious approach to the LRTE is somewhat perplexing given that they recently

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were able to coordinate a complex nationwide nuclear emergency response exercise (see paragraph 9). END COMMENT.]

CAEA PRESSING FOR AGREEMENT AT NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT

¶ 8. (SBU) Immediately after his meeting with CAEA officials, Admiral Krol had a follow-on meeting with CAEA Vice Chairman and Party Secretary General WANG Yiren. Wang said the U.S. proposal to hold a global nuclear security summit has been well received by Chinese leaders and in this context CAEA is looking to strengthen its relationship with DOE/NNSA. Wang also said China's State Council has already agreed to DOE's proposal to establish a nuclear security center of excellence in China (see paragraph 3) and has designated CAEA as the lead in this effort. CAEA already has begun making preparations for a demonstration center. Moreover, it was CAEA's desire to have U.S. and Chinese leaders sign this agreement during the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in April and designated LU Yongde, CAEA's Director General for International Cooperation, as the lead coordinator for the Chinese side. Admiral Krol noted that with only three months left before the summit, it would be difficult to accomplish this goal in time.

CHINA HOLDS FIRST NATIONAL NUCLEAR EMERGENCY EXERCISE

¶ 9. (SBU) CAEA officials confirmed that China held its first national nuclear emergency exercise last November to test and evaluate nuclear emergency procedures. DG Tong said the resulting data is still being analyzed but did not provide additional detail. CAEA's official website notes that the exercise took place on November 10 and consisted of a three-tiered effort involving national-level ministries, provincial government entities, and nuclear power plants. It also included military participation from the People's Liberation Army General Staff Department. In total, over 2000 people participated in the exercise. The exercise simulated an accidental leak of radioactive material from a key reactor pipe at the Tianwan nuclear power plant in Jiangsu province. CAEA invited observers from Japan and South Korea and sent a preliminary report detailing the exercise to the IAEA.

¶ 10. (SBU) Admiral Krol issued a preliminary invitation to CAEA to observe the U.S. National Level Emergency Response Exercise that is tentatively scheduled for May and will take place in Nevada. The "consequence management" exercise is designed to test federal and local emergency response following the detonation of a nuclear weapon in a U.S. city. Admiral Krol noted that congressional authorization to hold the exercise is still pending but said DOE would inform CAEA if and when the date is finalized. CAEA said that they would like to send observers.

COMMENT

¶ 11. (SBU) Following the March 2008 Chinese government reorganization, which left CAEA short-staffed and in seeming disarray for the past two years, CAEA appears to be reasserting itself and is looking to regain bureaucratic clout with a high-profile agreement with the U.S. at the upcoming global nuclear

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security summit. During several recent meetings with CAEA, ESTHOFF has observed a much more confident and focused organization, which

appears better positioned to take-on the significant challenges associated with China's rapidly expanding nuclear energy program.
END COMMENT.

¶12. (U) This cable was cleared by DOE/NNSA Associate Administrator Admiral Krol.

HUNTSMAN